

How do I know what job is right for me?

In our diverse economy, there are many ways to achieve workforce success, and they don't all follow the same straight or orderly path. Employers in Central Minnesota now provide more than 276,000 jobs and the state has over 3 million jobs, so it can be hard to know which one might be right for you.

Assessments and career exploration are a great way to help students and jobseekers make the best possible choices. What things do you like to do? What's your personality style? What skills and abilities do you have? There are a variety of free career assessments available online at sites including CareerOneStop (careeronestop.org), O*NET (www.onetonline.org), and DEED (<https://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/job-guide/>) that can help.

Knowing more about yourself is critical to career planning. People choose different jobs at different points in their lives, and for very different reasons, but no one can do it for you.

You are in charge of your career planning process!



How much education or training will I need to get that job?

Graduating from high school is an important first step, but from there the path to success can go in many different directions. For example, students and jobseekers can go straight to work, into the military, on to college, start an apprenticeship, or something else, depending on your career goals.



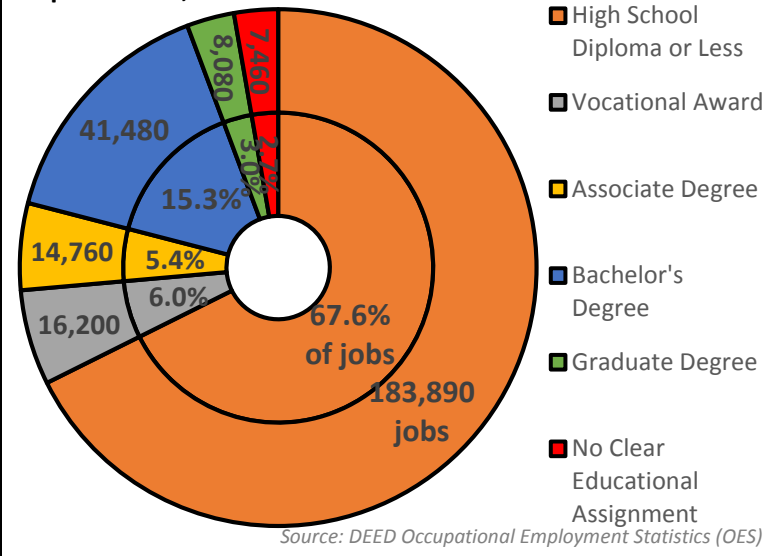
In other words, there are many pathways into the labor market. Some are short-term solutions, while others are long-term decisions. There are costs and benefits to every approach, and there are practical steps that students and jobseekers can take to make the most out of their career planning and educational investment.

It's best to pick something that you enjoy doing, and that matches your skills and personality. Once you've found something you like, it's important to know that every occupation requires some training, ranging from short-term to long-term. **Whether you go to college or not, on-the-job training and continual learning is critical to your career success.**

Do I need to go to college?

College is an excellent way to move up career ladders and open windows of opportunity to fields that would otherwise be closed, such as nursing or engineering. Many of these occupations offer high wages and are in high demand in the marketplace. Certain careers – such as dentists, lawyers, and school teachers – require a college education, while other jobs – including cost estimators, sales representatives, and correctional officers – do not. ***Students and jobseekers might be surprised to learn that well over half of all jobs in Central Minnesota can be started with a high school diploma or less, and only about one-third require college.***

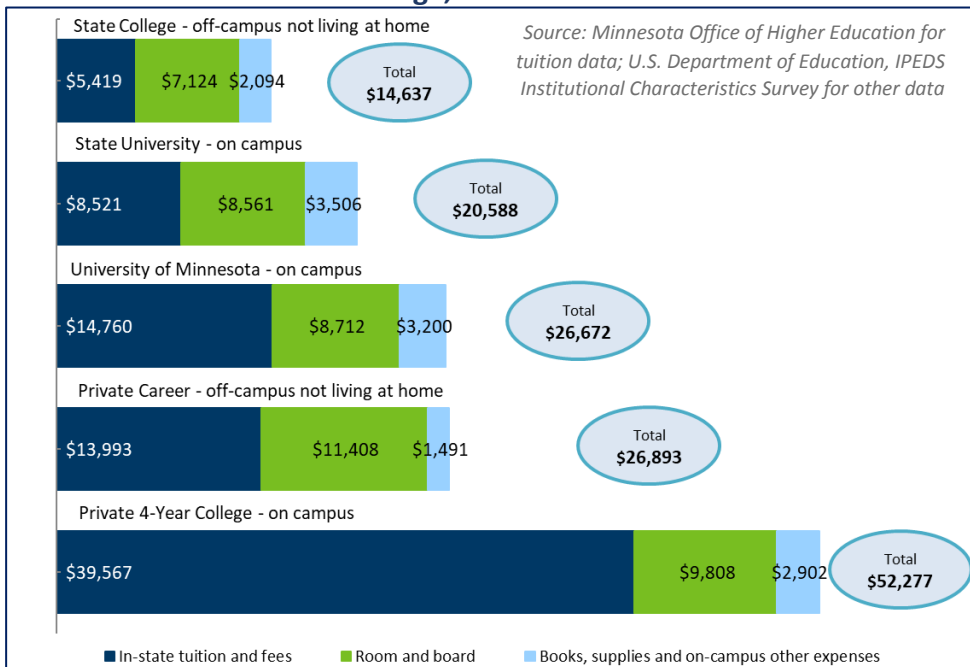
Central Minnesota Share of Jobs by Educational Requirements, 2019



How much does college cost?

While education is typically a worthwhile investment, ***college can be expensive*** – with average annual expenses ranging between \$14,500 and over \$50,000 per year in Minnesota. At that level, an associate's degree at a state college in 2019 cost roughly \$30,000 (\$14,637 x 2 years) and a four-year bachelor's degree at the University of Minnesota passed \$100,000 (\$26,672 x 4 years). The Office of Higher Education provides a list of tuition and fees for every college in Minnesota (www.ohe.state.mn.us).

Average Annual Expense for a Resident Undergraduate Attending Full-Time at a Minnesota College, 2018-2019



For those who go to college, your ***choice of major matters*** – different programs lead to different jobs that earn different amounts of money. For example, students who graduated from a Minnesota college with an associate's degree in Registered Nursing were earning over \$70,000 within 3 years of graduating, while students with a 4-year bachelor's degree in Parks, Recreation & Leisure Studies were earning less than \$37,000. DEED's [Graduate Employment Outcomes tool](#) can help potential students compare the costs of college with the typical earnings of graduates from programs at every Minnesota postsecondary institution to determine if their chosen major makes financial sense.

How much income will I need to make?

DEED's [Cost of Living tool](#) provides a yearly estimate of the basic needs cost of living in Minnesota, for individuals and families, by county, region, and statewide. The tool uses federal and state data to examine monthly living costs in seven categories: food, housing, health care, transportation, child care, other necessities, and net taxes.

According to 2019 estimates, the basic needs cost of living for a **single person** in Central Minnesota was **\$31,212**, which would require an hourly wage of **\$15.01** over the course of a full-time, year-round work schedule (2,080 hours). The highest costs were for housing and transportation, but of course both of those are greatly impacted by where you choose to live. Other costs would also vary based on your lifestyle, family size, and work status, and can go up or down based on your choices.

Central Minnesota Basic Needs Cost of Living, 2019



Source: DEED Cost of Living tool, 2019

How much income will I actually make?

While income isn't the only thing that matters when choosing a career, everyone wants and needs to make money. In general, the job you choose determines the amount of money you're able to make over the course of your lifetime.

Data show that hourly wages rise for each additional level of education completed; however, it's important to see that **there are opportunities for jobs that provide livable wages at every level of education**, including many that boast strong current and future demand in your region of the state.



Source: DEED Occupational Employment Statistics and Educational Requirements, 2019

Put simply, **not all great jobs require college, and not all college graduates end up in great paying jobs**. You can find state and regional wage information for about 800 occupations in Minnesota using DEED's Occupational Employment Statistics tool (<https://mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/oes/>).

What jobs are in demand in my region?

According to DEED's [Occupations in Demand tool](#), there are over 290 occupations showing high demand in Central Minnesota, with training and education requirements ranging from short-term on-the-job training to postsecondary education to advanced degrees:

Central Minnesota Regional Occupations in Demand (with Median Wage), 2019			
Less than High School	High School or Equivalent	Some College or Assoc. Degree	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Retail Salespersons \$25,362	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers \$48,425	Registered Nurses \$77,526	Elementary School Teachers \$57,806
Personal Care Aides \$26,819	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers \$41,149	Nursing Assistants \$35,265	Secondary School Teachers \$58,086
Combined Food Preparation & Serving \$23,801	Teacher Assistants \$30,937	Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses \$46,876	Software Developers, Applications \$85,496
Cashiers \$24,482	Carpenters \$50,024	Automotive Service Technicians & Mechanics \$39,870	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education \$32,388
Stock Clerks & Order Fillers \$25,685	First-Line Supervisors of Food Prep & Serving Workers \$36,181	Heating, Air Cond. (HVAC) & Refrigeration Mechanics \$51,059	Human Resources Specialists \$56,611
Janitors & Cleaners \$29,692	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, & Brazers \$46,676	Machinists \$49,847	Middle School Teachers \$60,055
Laborers & Freight, Stock & Material \$34,830	Secretaries & Administrative Assistants \$41,947	Hairdressers, Hairstylists, & Cosmetologists \$30,265	Industrial Engineers \$82,415
Home Health Aides \$28,942	Office Clerks, General \$36,597	Police & Sheriff's Patrol Officers \$63,297	Market Research Analysts & Marketing Specialists \$52,743
Cooks, Restaurant \$27,711	Maintenance & Repair Workers, General \$43,720	Electricians \$68,811	Nurse Practitioners \$105,231
Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners \$26,215	Customer Service Representatives \$34,038	Radiologic Technologists \$62,286	Financial Managers \$93,620

Source: DEED Occupations in Demand

Who can help me with my job search?

There are a lot of people and resources that are willing and able to help you find a job or plan for your career, but it is up to you to reach out to them and put their advice into action.

The sooner you get started forging your path, the better!

CAREER INFORMATION RESOURCES IN CENTRAL MINNESOTA:

Leslie Wojtowicz, CMJTS

CareerForce Monticello

Office: 763-271-3757

Email: lwojtowicz@cmjts.org

Angie Dahle, CareerSolutions (formerly SBETC)

CareerForce St. Cloud

Office: 320-308-5334

Email: Angie.Dahle@CSJobs.org

Luke Greiner, DEED

Regional Analyst

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Web: www.mn.gov/deed/data/

